

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the Application.

Listing of Claims:

1-30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) A processor-enabled method for providing a program price for the purchase of a vehicle fuel, comprising:

receiving customer expected fuel usage data;

~~querying a database for program sponsor data associated with the customer usage data;~~

receiving program sponsor data, wherein said program sponsor data includes an amount of a finder's fee paid by a program sponsor to a program operator;

calculating a customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price for a type of vehicle fuel that a customer is authorized to pay for any qualified fuel purchase from any qualified fuel seller, using customer expected fuel usage data and said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data, wherein said customer expected fuel usage data includes a customer-specific quantity of fuel to be purchased and a number of months during which the customer is authorized to buy fuel at the customer specific, fixed, guaranteed program price ~~will apply~~ for the type of fuel to be purchased;

using said customer expected fuel usage data and said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data to develop a financial hedging strategy to diminish a risk to the program operator in connection with guaranteeing of the customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price in light of volatility of fuel prices; and

storing said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price for use in association with a purchase of said vehicle fuel.

32-37. (Cancelled)

38. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 31 wherein calculating said customer-specific, fixed guaranteed program price includes calculating multiple customer-specific, fixed guaranteed program prices for multiple geographic regions.

39. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 31 wherein said hedging strategy includes purchasing a futures contract on said vehicle fuel.

40. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 31 wherein said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price is a percentage discount to a current price.

41. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 31 wherein said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price is a capped price.

42-54. (Cancelled)

55. (Currently Amended) A processor-enabled method for providing a program price for the purchase of a vehicle fuel, comprising:

receiving customer expected fuel usage data;

~~querying a database for program sponsor data associated with the customer usage data;~~

receiving program sponsor data, wherein said program sponsor data includes an amount of a finder's fee paid by a program sponsor to a program operator;

determining a market indicator relevant to the future price of a vehicle fuel;

calculating a customer-specific, fixed guaranteed program price that a customer is authorized to pay for any qualified fuel purchase from any qualified seller using the received customer expected fuel usage data and program sponsor data, wherein said customer expected fuel usage data includes a customer-specific quantity of fuel to be purchased, a number of months during which the customer is authorized to buy fuel at the customer-specific, fixed guaranteed program price ~~will apply~~ and a type of fuel to be purchased;

using customer expected fuel usage data, said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data and said market indicator to develop a financial hedging strategy to diminish a risk to the program operator in connection with guaranteeing of the customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price in light of volatility of fuel prices; and

storing said guaranteed program price for use in association with a purchase of said vehicle fuel.

56-60. (Cancelled)

61. (Previously Amended) A method in accordance with claim 55 wherein calculating said guaranteed program price further includes using said hedging strategy.

62-64. (Cancelled)

65. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 55 wherein calculating said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price includes calculating multiple customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program prices for multiple geographic regions.

66. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 55 wherein said hedging strategy includes purchasing a futures contract on said vehicle fuel.

67. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 55 wherein said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price is a percentage discount to a current price.

68. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 55 wherein said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price is a capped price.

69-114. (Cancelled)

115. (New) A processor-enabled method for providing a program price for the purchase of a vehicle fuel, comprising:

receiving customer expected fuel usage data;

receiving program sponsor data, wherein said program sponsor data includes an amount of a finder's fee paid by a program sponsor to a program operator incident to the establishment of an affinity relationship between the program sponsor and the customer;

calculating a customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price for a type of vehicle fuel that a customer is authorized to pay for any qualified fuel purchase from any qualified fuel seller, using customer expected fuel usage data, a projected retail fuel price and said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data, wherein said customer expected fuel usage data includes:

an anticipated primary geographic fuel usage area,

a customer-specific quantity of fuel to be purchased, and

a number of months during which the customer is authorized to buy fuel at the customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price for the type of fuel to be purchased;

collecting said customer expected fuel usage data with customer expected fuel usage data corresponding to other customers to form an aggregate customer expected fuel usage dataset;

using said aggregate customer expected fuel usage dataset and said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data to develop a financial hedging strategy to diminish a risk to the program operator in connection with guaranteeing of the customer-specific, guaranteed program price in light of volatility of fuel prices; and

storing said guaranteed program price for use in association with a purchase of said vehicle fuel.